

October 2006

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. PO Box 220 Warrandyte 3113
ABN 94170156655/ACN A0024890C

Interps and Misinterps

By Mike Coupar

A spare afternoon. Time to revisit the Park. So many reserves to choose from, so much to see. Where would I start? Without my maps I would be relying on the interpretation signs and information boards at the various sites to guide me. This is what I found. I have rated each of the reserve's interpretations and signage on a five star basis:

Pound Bend. ★★★★★☆

The signs greeting me at the picnic area pointed the way to the tunnel, canoe ramp, picnic areas and parking. At the top of the sign in bold yellow letters it pronounced: 'Gates locked 6.00pm'. If I didn't know otherwise, I would have to cut my walk short! However, it has been Parks Victoria policy since autumn to leave gates permanently open.

The covered information shelter has a useful map and good information. Although the one eucalypt featured – Brown Stringybark – does not actually occur in the Park! There are also several interpretive signs near the tunnel and in the car park about the history of the area.



Whipstick Gully. ★★★★★☆

Another gold history area. The large undercover information shelter is still looking in good condition. The poppet head, however, is a little worse for wear as a couple of the cross beams are rotting.



A new addition since I was last at Whipstick Gully is an audio panel erected by Manningham City Council with input from the local community. Pushing various buttons gives you the sounds of the area, explanations of gold mining techniques and instructions on how to pan for gold. It also tells the history of the Victory Mine – what a

shame that the mine itself is now out of bounds to the public - its entrance blocked by a solid iron gate. This is one of the reasons this reserve lost stars, but nevertheless ranked higher due to the excellent audio display.



Interps and Misinterps contd

Gold Memorial Picnic Area. ★★★★★

Located on the other side of Fourth Hill from Whipstick Gully, this small picnic area beside the creek does not have an information shelter any more. Apparently vandalism was a major problem. More of a problem, though, is that there is now only one access into and out of the car park. I found it extremely difficult and potentially dangerous – even in my small car – to make a left hand turn when exiting.

Norman Reserve. ★★★★★

At the end of Bradleys Lane is Norman Reserve – basically a linear strip along the river with canoe access and a view across to tunnel entrance.

While there is a gate at the entrance to the car park, this has not been closed for a long time. However the sign still reads gate closed at 5.00pm!

Black Flat. ★★★★★

Another area with many relics from the gold mining era and a network of tracks that meander beside the river.

There used to be a numbered self-guided history walk with a pamphlet you could pick up from a box near the start. Unfortunately the box has gone and only the post remains. Perhaps the pamphlets can be obtained from the Park office.

Jumping Creek. ★★★★★

An extremely popular reserve. Well serviced with bbq's (plenty of wood supplied), undercover picnic area, toilets and undercover information board with useful map etc. This was the only reserve with a box containing a nature walk leaflet. There were several available all of which were laminated with a label saying please return. This is a good idea.

My rating for this reserve is let down by three gate closure signs: a large one at the entrance, one half way along on the left and another at the start of the picnic. This is deceitful and unfair on responsible Park users who might like to stay past six o'clock.

Mount Lofty. ★★★★★

My last stop was at Mount Lofty at the end of Lower Homestead Road, Wonga Park. This is a highly significant area of the Park. It is where the Yarra River leaves the Yarra Valley flats to enter the Warrandyte Gorge. It would be nice if the geological story of this place could be told. Unfortunately vandalism has prevented this and the information shelter that was once there has had to be taken down.

There is a picnic table situated, not ideally, in the middle of the car park turning circle. There is evidence of a camp fire near the river. Perhaps if bbq's were supplied people might be less inclined to make their own fires.

People in Plants

By Shelagh Morton



Thysanotus patersonii (Twining Fringe Lily).

William Paterson, soldier, explorer, founder of Launceston and Lieutenant-Governor of New South Wales from 1800 till 1810 was a weak ruler, but a passionate botanist.

Robert Brown, who spent some years in New South Wales at this time, discovered and named this lovely lily for him and it was elegantly drawn by Ferdinand Bauer.

Paterson collected many botanical, geological and insect specimens from the countries he visited and sent them to Sir Joseph Banks to add to his collection. His own collection is preserved in the Natural History Museum in London.

There is a town, a river, and an electorate named after him, and he is remembered in many more plants we know. The beautiful purple flag lilies, *Patersonia fragilis*, and *Patersonia occidentalis* are welcome additions to many gardens.

Bush Backyard

A Slimey Tale

By Pat Coupar

The other morning, in my bush backyard, I came across a very strange white 'substance' spread over the leaf litter. There were several patches of it, about 25 cms in diameter each.

I was fairly sure that the gooey white material was a slime mould and this was confirmed when I consulted Bruce Fuhrer's book on Australian Fungi. While slime moulds share some of the characteristics of fungi (and amoeba) they are classified in a separate kingdom.



The fruiting body, called a sporangium, produces spores like a fungus. However this develops into a slimey, creeping, amoeba-like mass that feeds on bacteria, fungi and decaying organic matter. This is the stage that I had found.

When conditions are right the moving mass transforms back into a sporangium.

What a fascinating organism the slime mould is – neither plant, animal or fungi, or perhaps all of the above. No wonder they belong to their own kingdom.

The Soothing Goldfish

By Steven Katsineris

When we moved into our house in Hurstbridge, there was a large hole in the ground, in the front yard, which had once been a concrete pond. It was full of branches, rocks, bricks, leaves, soil and other debris. We decided to restore the area and make it a fishpond.

With the children's help I cleaned the rubbish out of the pit, lined it with plastic, built an island

in the middle, landscaped and planted grasses and bushes in the area surrounding the pond. We filled it with water and after checking that there were no leaks in the pond, we went and bought ten Goldfish in various colours.

We bought a large chair and placed it under a tree facing the pond and I continued to add rocks, logs and plants to the area around the pond. It was transformed into a beautiful spot and all the family has enjoyed countless quiet hours resting on the chair in the shade of the tree reading, chatting, having a drink and watching the fish swim about in the pond. It is also a wonderful place to sit down and contemplate.

Over the years Kookaburras and Blue Herons have visited the pond and have eaten some of our Goldfish. After each visit we would lose a couple of Goldfish and I would go and get more to restock the pond. The children found it a bit distressing, especially after one Blue Heron caught several fish, but only ate some of them, leaving the rest on the ground to die. I think some were too big for it to swallow. I managed to get three of these stranded and fading Goldfish back in the water and they survived. In the end I had to put netting over the pond to protect the Goldfish. The birds continue to visit the yard, as there are plenty of skinks and wildlife in the garden for them to eat.

Every few years we take the fish out of the pond and clean the pond out, as it gets full of leaves, twigs and soil over time. When we do we usually find a few Pobblebonk frogs in the rocks and aquatic vegetation. One day while we were cleaning the pond out, we had the fish in two buckets and our youngest daughter Lara was standing nearby looking at the fish when a bold Kookaburra flew down from a tree and grabbed a Goldfish from the bucket.

Some people believe that Goldfish can't remember anything that happened more than a few seconds ago. Despite these stories of Goldfish having a really short memory span, their reactions show this is not true. After the initial fishing visits by the Kookaburras and Herons I at first thought that all the fish had been taken, as I hadn't seen



Bush Backyard contd

any of them for days after. When I noticed that they were still there, I put food in the pond and they would move quickly out of hiding to feed and then hide again.

I have also noticed that when we stand in the spot where we throw the fish food into the pond, the Goldfish will appear. Sometimes they also swim about in that same spot, waiting to be fed. So I'm sure they have a very good memory.

Our fishpond is an enchanting, tranquil and calming place. There are still five of our original Goldfish among the ten in the pond and we continue to take great pleasure in watching them swim serenely about in the fishpond.

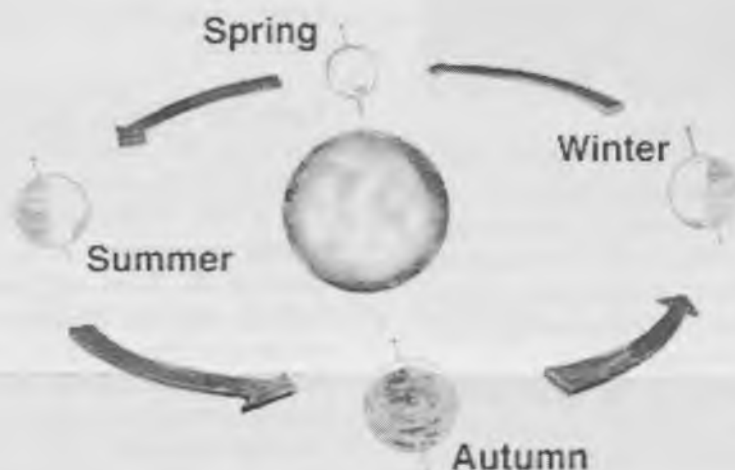
What's happening in your backyard this month?

Contributions can either be dropped into the editor at 143 Brackenbury St, Warrandyte or via email at ian.coupar@vcp.monash.edu.au



The Spring Equinox

The seasons are governed by the tilt of the Earth's axis in space as it journeys around the Sun in a year. When the South Pole of the Earth is tilted towards the Sun, this is our Summer. Six months later, when the South Pole is tilted away from the Sun, it's our Winter. In between these we have Autumn and Spring.



Temperatures on our planet are not determined by the distance of the Earth from the Sun. Rather it is the angle of the Sun's rays striking the Earth. In Summer, the Sun is high in the Sky and the rays hit the Earth at a steep angle. In winter, the Sun is low in the Sky and the rays strike the Earth at a shallow angle.

The seasons don't begin on one day and finish on another. That's because our orbit around the Sun is continuous. It actually takes quite some time for the Earth to heat up or cool down, and that's why the seasons change gradually.

So when do we actually start the seasons? In some parts of the world, such as Australia, seasons begin on the first day of a particular calendar month - in March for Autumn, June for Winter, September for Spring and December for Summer. In other countries such as Britain, it's accepted that the seasons begin on the dates that the Earth passes four special points in its orbit about the Sun.

Source *Melbourne Planetarium*

FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

We meet for propagation and other nursery activities every Thursday morning at 10.00am at the Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10), unless otherwise stated below. When there is no scheduled afternoon activity we often go on a spontaneously organised walk. Propagation takes place from 10.00am to 12 midday followed by lunch. No prior experience necessary - there is always someone available to show you the ropes.

PLEASE NOTE

The nursery is open for plant sales (by donation) every Thursday. Please note new opening times for Thursdays 9.30am to 12.30pm and the first Sunday of each month 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

New Prices

Members 80 cents

Nonmembers \$1.20

Important Notice

Please note the nursery is only open for plant sales during the above times. Some members and non-members have been turning up for plants (and advice) outside these hours without prior arrangement. If you find it impossible to come during official opening times please contact the nursery manager first.



Sunday Walks 2006

Held on the first Sunday of each month. Meet at 10.15 am. Bring a water bottle and snack to eat on the walk if you wish. Wear walking shoes and clothing appropriate to the weather. Walks will last approximately 2 hours. Join us after the walk for a BYO lunch (BBQ available) at 'the Folly' at Warrandyte State Park Rangers Depot, Pound Bend. Hot and cold drinks provided.

Walks are FREE. Bookings are ESSENTIAL. For more information contact Jeanette 9840 9129

November 5th: 'Birds from River to Ridge.' Ken Harris **Meet:** South end of Pound Bend Picnic area carpark off Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Mel Ref 23 A11)

December 3rd: 'Yarra Brae.' Anthony Owen. **Meet:** Clifford Park Scout Camp, Clifford Drive, Wonga Park (Mel Ref 24 J6)

Thursday Walks 2006

Held on the fourth Thursday of the month at 1.00pm. Meet at the nursery, Pound Bend Rangers depot, Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10). Walks will last approximately 2 hours.

FOWSP Committee 2006

Joan Broadberry 9846 1218 Treasurer
Pat Coupar 9844 1650 Newsletter Editor
Peter Curry 9844 0958
Geoff Speedy 9437 0894
Lee Speedy 9437 0894 Membership Secretary
Mike Coupar 9844 1650
Karen Reynolds 9712 0797 Minutes Secretary
Martyn Hiley 9844 4547
Artur Muchow 0415383328
Gray Ardern
Winsome Coutts
Michelle Hanslow 0402251577

Nursery Manager 0408317327

Park Office 9844 2659

Wildlife Rescue

Julie Pryor 9722 1117

Market

Marie Krause 9712 0498

Manningham City Council Environment Seminars 2006

The seminars are FREE

Held on the 1st Wednesday of the month, no bookings required

Time: at 7.30pm



Please Note: NEW VENUE: South Warrandyte Hall, 66-68 Hall Rd, Sth Warrandyte (Mel ref. 35 J8)

November 1st 'Indigenous Story'
December 6th 'Bush Heritage Fund'

Mick Woiwod
Paul Foreman

Thursday Activity Group (TAG)

The activities will take place on the first Thursday of the month from 10.00am to 12md. Either meet at the depot or on site.

So if you are interested in learning some vegetation management skills and helping improve some special sites in the Park just tag along with the Thursday Activity Group (TAG).

Thursday October 5th **Planting at Pound Bend.** Meet at the depot at 10.00am

Thursday November 2nd **Honeysuckle Removal at Norman Reserve.** Meet at the depot at 10.00am

Deadline for November newsletter is October 29th

contributions can be sent to PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113 or
email ian.coupar@vcp.monash.edu.

Cranbourne Botanic Gardens Nursery

By Pat Coupar

Last month I was lucky enough to visit the Cranbourne Botanical Gardens. As a fuel reduction burn was being carried out that day, the bushland tracks were out of bounds. However, there was plenty to see in the recently opened Australian Garden. Several months ago a group of Fowspians visited the gardens and this was written up by Cath Andrew in the August newsletter.

My report, however, is on a 'behind the scenes' tour of the nursery. My overall impression I have to say was one of disappointment. Firstly and probably most important of all was that there were no attempts at energy saving. Despite plentiful roof run off from various buildings, there were no water tanks. All watering is from mains water!! Neither did I see a single solar panel.

As to the nursery itself, trays of pots (the same as we use) were placed directly on the ground exposed to heat and frost. I noticed the same troublesome weeds growing in some of the pots that we have – notably Flickweed and Epilobium.

Most impressive was the state of the art glass house for cuttings and seed germination. Computer automated fog spray (ultra fine) came on at regular intervals. Cuttings in trays and punnets were on wire tables that moved easily on rollers. Apparently the shade cloth automatically rolls across when it becomes too hot or bright.



What a pity that less than a quarter of the space available was being used.

Propagation from seed and cuttings is about 50/50. No additional fertilizer is added to the Debco potting mix which, incidentally, is steam sterilized like the pots themselves. There is no shade house, once seedlings are pricked out the plants are moved directly outside.

There is a large indoor propagating area, a fridge in which all seed is stored at 4 deg as well as offices and computers that print out labels.

So what of the plants themselves. It is an undeniable challenge to grow so many plants from so many regions of Australia with such different requirements. Once again I was disappointed, the quality of many of the plants was not that good – some yellowing etc. However, this is not reflected in the display of plants in the Australian garden.

It was an interesting insight. I had hoped to learn some new techniques on propagation, but it seems that we are already doing most things the same at our nursery, if not better.

Spring Outdoors

Fourth Hill on Display

Thursday 27th October. 1.15pm-3.30pm
Accompany Josh Revell and Cathy Willis on an enjoyable stroll through a sea of colourful wildflowers while keeping an eye out for the resident Powerful Owls



Where: Meet at Park gate, end of Tunnel St, Warrandyte (Melway 35 F2)

Where are They?

Many thanks to all newsletter contributors.

The editor would still like contributions for the following segments: Book Review, My Favourite Road (Beach, Mountain etc), My Worst Weed and Food for Thought.

Articles can be sent by post to PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113 or via email at ian.coupar@vcp.monash.edu.au.

Bulletins

If you would like to be sent an email bulletin of events please send your email address to committee member Martyn Hiley at Martyn@Hiley.cx

Worth Repeating

Food for Karak

By Karen Alexander

Is there a more secure future for Karak, our great, grand and endangered Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo?

A recent application to fell 50 or so of its favourite Wimmera food source trees - those 100 year-old Bulokes - for centre pivot irrigation has been rejected by DSE because it would be an 'unacceptable impact'.

The local West Wimmera Shire is obliged to accept the DSE decision.

While the VNPA has no wish to stop the irrigation industry, sustainable agriculture must surely include not jeopardising the long-term survival of our 'fellow Victorians'.

There's been 25% loss of Buloke in the last 15



years and the vast majority of applications to clear them in the last four years have been granted.

Regulations are not popular. But they can impel us to find cleverer ways of achieving our goals. Surely this is the journey of 'sustainability'?

So we warmly welcome this decision and congratulate the government on effective implementation of its Native Vegetation Management Framework.

We understand that representatives from West Wimmera Council visited Minister Thwaites to protest about the decision and that the Minister was clear about the need to protect Karak's habitat. If there are ways of achieving this with centre pivot developments he would be happy to hear about them.

And if you haven't seen Karak in the wild, visit the Wimmera and ask the local Council at Edenhope where to go - and congratulate them on a good decision. This is a fabulous area any time of year, but especially in spring, and those birds are a marvel.

P.S. A count by 155 volunteers in April recorded a total of 1078 Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos in south-west Victoria and south-east South Australia.

Source: VNPA update July 2006

Wildlife Rescue

By Julie Pryor

Nothing has been happening with the koalas this month.

We did have three sightings; they were at Yarra Brae Close, Wonga Park, (next to the Park), Pound Road Warrandyte and Blackburn Road near The Pines Shopping Centre. All three have been left where they were. As we are coming into breeding season koalas are starting to move, so hopefully we will have more sightings.

I had the honour of baby sitting an 8 week old Dingo puppy last week. I now know I do not need a dingo puppy. He took over the house on entry. The table cloth was on the floor before I entered the room, the floor mat was chewed on one edge and as I stopped him doing this, he ran to the other side and started to chew that. Many other things were chewed but I drew the line



when he pulled the power cords out from behind the TV. Overnight I thought he had died, as there was not a sound out of him, when I got up in the morning he was sitting in the cage looking at me and he was ready to go again.

This puppy was being transported to the Tuton Dingo Farm. Tehree Gordon has purchased the Bruce Jacobs Dingo farm and she is trying to help save the dingo. All dingoes on the farm have a home for life, but only pure breeds will be allowed to breed.

Koala Letter

When we went to Wye River for a holiday I saw a lot of koalas. There was a koala in our back yard in a tree. We saw some others crossing the road and sitting in trees. Koalas look interesting, clever and cute. Koalas need gum trees to live in and eat leaves. So people shouldn't cut down so many trees because the trees are their homes and food.

Lara Katsineris Paine

I am six.

Worth Repeating

Old seeds, new growth

LONDON. A handful of 200-year-old seeds discovered inside a red leather-bound notebook at the National Archives in London have been nurtured to life by botanists at Britain's Royal Botanic Gardens.

Against all odds, experts at Wakehurst Place, south of London, resurrected three different plant species from the seeds in a recovery effort few had believed would succeed. The survival of the seeds is all the more remarkable for the conditions they have endured since being collected by Jan Teerlink, a Dutch merchant, on a visit to the Cape of Good Hope in 1803 during the Napoleonic wars. On his return, his Prussian vessel was captured by the British navy and all documents were impounded by the Admiralty.

Source: *The Age*, September 2006

News from the Committee

Nothing to report from the committee this month. Committee meetings are held at 7.30pm in the meeting room at the Rangers Office, Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte.

The next meeting is on October 10th

All committee meetings are open to any member who wishes to come along.

Market Volunteers

A big thank you to the following people who volunteered their time on the FOWSP trailer at the September Warrandyte market: Ray Kruger, John Hanson, Michael Hubbert, Alan Woolcock, Antje Bauer, Wolfgang and Marie Krause.

The trailer was delivered by Geoff Speedy and returned by Wolfgang Krause.

Anyone who would like to be rostered on to help with the trailer, even for just one hour, can contact Marie Krause on 9712 0498. New members especially welcome - no previous experience necessary.

FOWSP Annual General Meeting



The FOWSP AGM will be held on **Sunday November 12th at 6.00pm** at the Warrandyte State Park depot, **Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10).**

All members are invited to attend. It is an opportunity to put forward suggestions for the future running of the group or air any complaints.

After the meeting there will be a BBQ (BYO meat and drink and a plate to share). This will be followed by a special audio visual presentation on a trip to Nitmiluk and Kakadu by Cathy, Trisha, Martin and Ant. Don't miss it!

The Victorian Christmas Bush (*Prostanthera lasianthos*)



The Victorian Christmas Bush is one of the indigenous mint bushes. It is a different species from the NSW Christmas Bush. The Victorian Christmas Bush is a large, fast growing shrub or small tree growing up to 4m and occurs along the banks of creeks and in the cool, moist gullies and other damp situations. It is found mostly in the eastern highland forests of Victoria, NSW, Qld. and Tasmania. The Christmas Bush is also known as Coranderrk (Wurrundjeri) and was used by Aboriginal people to treat rheumatism and its stems were used as fire sticks.

Steven Katsineris. July 2006.



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Sweet Pittosporum
(Pittosporum undulatum)

This Australian tree has become highly invasive in damp gullies and forests outside its natural range of the warm temperate forests of eastern Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. It is a problem environmental weed in Warrandyte State Park.

Male and female creamy-white, scented, flowers occur on separate trees. These are replaced in autumn by clusters of orange berries that are eaten by birds that then spread the seed in their droppings.

FOWSP Membership Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

Email.....

Special Interest:.....

Membership \$20

Concession \$10

Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

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